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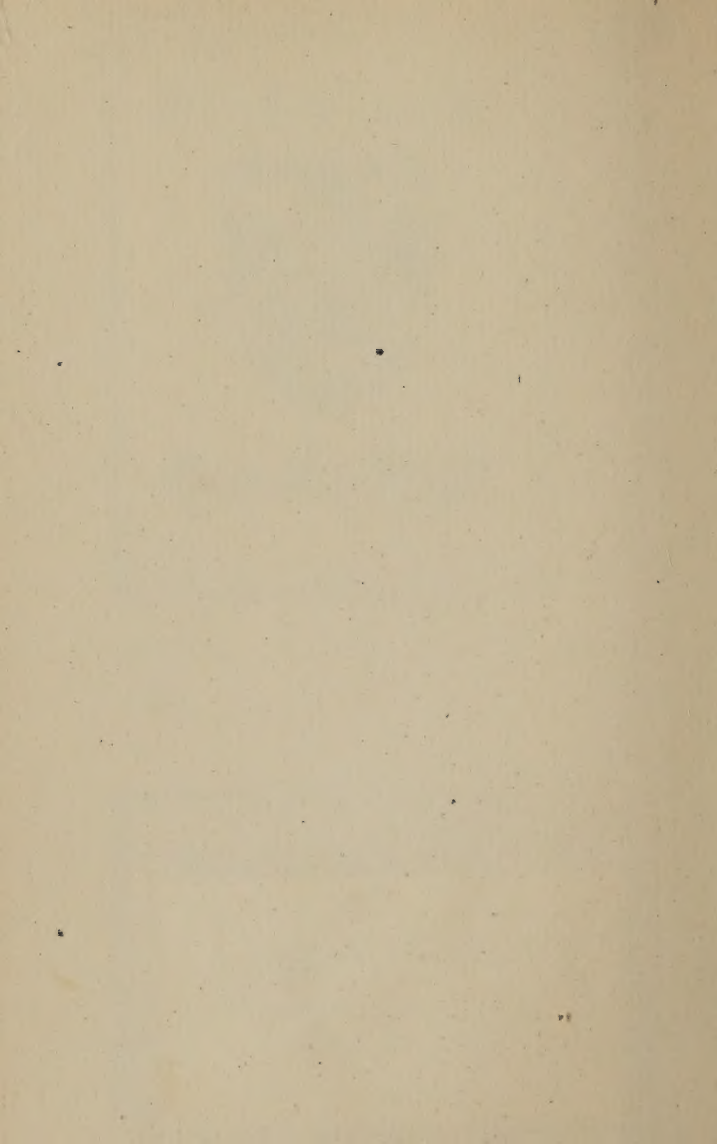
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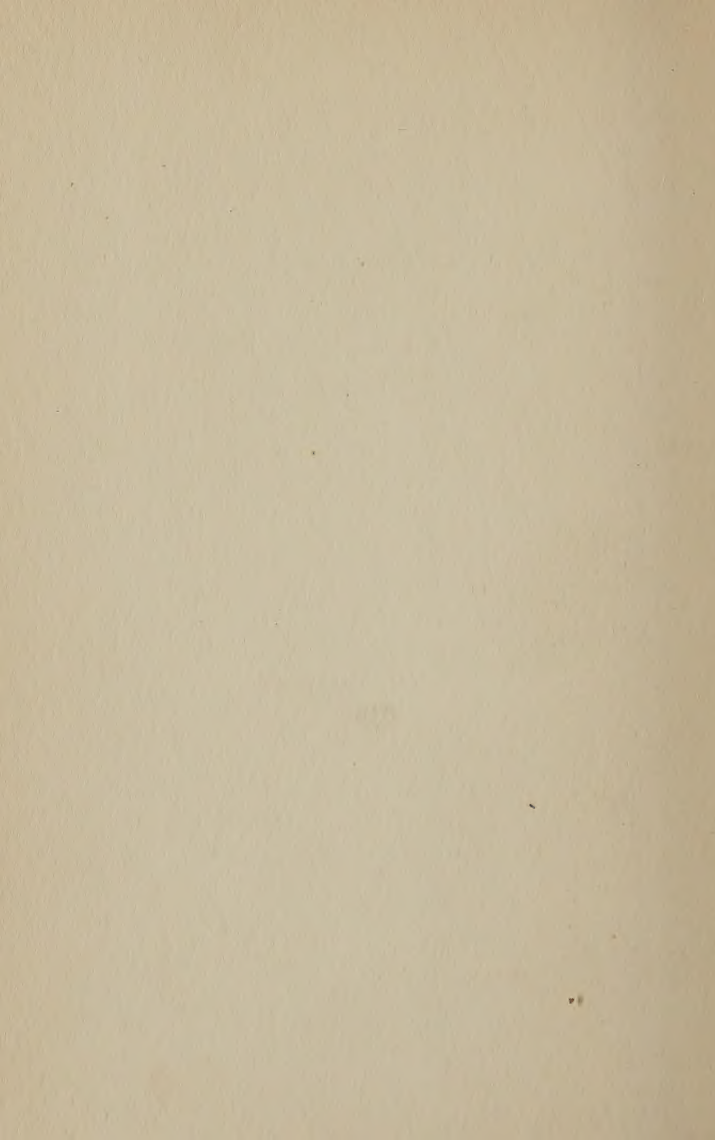
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SEEDS OF TIME



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POEMS—

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MARY STUART. 1921

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SWINBURNE. 1913

THE LYRIC. 1915

PROSE PAPERS. 1917

Seeds of Time

by John Drinkwater

If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow, and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg, nor fear,
Your favours nor your hate.

MACBETH.

London: Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.

3 Adam Street, Adelphi

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TO THE MEMORY
OF
CLAUD LOVAT FRASER

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SEEDS OF TIME

THRIFT

(TO F. L.)

No beauty beauty overthrows
But every joy its season knows,
And all enchanted hours prepare
Enchantment for to-morrow's wear.

Who in the just society
That walks with him this hour can see
But shadows of another bliss
Loses both that delight and this.

Grieve not the parting day, for soon
The nightingales will sing the moon
Climbing the track that now the sun
Leaves when the songs of day are done.

And grieve not when her beauty pales,
And silence keeps the nightingales,
For that eclipse again will bring
The sun with all his birds to sing.

THE TOLL-GATE HOUSE

THE toll-gate's gone, but still stands lone,
In the dip of the hill, the house of stone,
And over the roof in the branching pine
The great owl sits in the white moonshine.
An old man lives, and lonely, there,
His windows yet on the cross-roads stare,
And on Michaelmas night in all the years
A galloping far and faint he hears . . .
His casement open wide he flings
With " Who goes there ? " and a lantern
 swings . . .

But never more in the dim moonbeam
Than a cloak and a plume and the silver gleam
Of passing spurs in the night can he see,
For the toll-gate's gone and the road is free.

A LESSON TO MY GHOST

SHALL it be said that the wind's gone over
The hill this night, and no ghost there ?
Not the shape of an old-time lover
Pacing the old road, the high road there ?
By the peacock tree, the tree that spreads its
 branches

Like a proud peacock's tail (so my lady says),
Under a cloudy sky, while the moon launches
Scattered beams of light along the dark silences ?
I will be a ghost there, though I yet am
 breathing,

A living presence still in tight cottage walls,
Sitting by the fire whose smoke goes wreathing
Over fields and farmyards and farmyard stalls.
As a player going to rehearse his faring,
I will send my ghost there before my bones are
 dust,

Bid it learn betimes the sock it shall be wearing
When it bids the clay good-bye, as all ghosts
 must.

Hush, then ; upstairs sleep my lady and her
 mother ;

The cat curls the night away, and will not stir ;
Beams of lamp and beech-log cross one another,
No wind walks in the garden there.

Go, my ghost, it calls you, the high road, the
 winding,

Written by the moonlight on the sleeping hill ;
I will watch the ashes, you go finding
The way you shall walk for generations still.

The window-latch is firm, the curtain does not
tremble,
The wet grass bends not under your tread,
Brushing you shake not the rain from the
bramble,
They hear no gate who lie abed.
Nodding I stare at the hearth, but I see you,
My half-wit travels with you the road ;
There shall be your kingdom when death shall
free you,
When body's wit is neither leash nor goad.
Past the peacock branches proudly gliding,
Your own ghost now, I know, I know,
You look to the moon on the hill-top riding,
The mares in the meadow sleep as you go.
Your eyes that are dark yet great for divining
Brood on the valleys of wood and plough,
And you stand where the silver flower is shining
Of cherry against the black holly bough.
Rehearse, O rehearse, as you pass by the
hedgerows,
Remembrance of all that was my bright will,
That so my grave of whispers and echoes
May rest for the ghost that is yet on the hill.
The primroses burn and the cowslips cover
The starry meadows as heaven is clad ;
Learn them all, O ghost, as a lover,
So shall your coming again be glad.
The inn-sign hangs in the windless watches,
You pass the shadowy piles of stone
Under the walls where the hawthorn catches

Shapes from the moon that are not its own.
Wander, wander down by the cresses,
Over the crest of the hill, between
The brown lych-gate and the cider-presses,
Past the well and across the green.
Heed me, my ghost, my heir. To-morrow,
Or soon, my body to ash must fall.
Heed me, ghost, and I shall not sorrow—
Learn this beauty, O learn it all.
Night goes on, the beech-log's ended,
Half-wit's drowsy, and doctrine done,—
Ghost, come home from the road ; befriended
My moon shall be when I leave the sun.

ABSENCE

THIS was a fair land
For the young soul to find,
Whose orchards are renewed
And blossom in the mind.
Far wave, far heaven, far hill,
I dream of England still.

And now this year's primrose
Shines under last year's leaves.
The swallow searches out
Accustomed eaves ;
Far wave, far heaven, far hill,
I dream of England still.

Though fresh devices come,
Yet is my custom true ;
There my vocation is,
That was my cradle too.
Far wave, far heaven, far hill,
I dream of England still.

A NEW BALLAD OF CHARITY

God knows how time shall use me yet,
For I with brain too wise have known
A world corrupt, nor can forget
Some evil there as still my own—
Poor griefs henceforth may be alone
My calendars to reckon by,
But in my empires overthrown
I'll keep a heart of charity.

Wronged, and wrong doing, still I'll pray
For gentleness to all my kind,
So soon to-morrow strikes to-day,
And then a day when all is blind,
And the vainglory of the mind
Passes, and all together lie
Where nothing is but hope to find
The excellence of charity.

There is no virtue in us all
But keeps with sin for housefellow,
And, when the blade of death shall fall,
Starveling and naked must we go ;
And none of all shall warrant show
To save him from damnation by,
But only this—" Dear God, you owe
All that I dealt of charity."

And, O you English, let us make
Our hearts a little wise to-day,
And learn for best religion's sake
To walk awhile the homeward way.

Too long we cast an alien clay
And towards a far and fading sky
Too long a pilgrimage we pay—
For there is not our charity.

Since I am English bred, I'll keep
A year and year my journey still
By little Langdale tarns asleep,
Or, with my rhymes on Bredon Hill,
I will go shepherding until
The shires from Severn down to Wye
Are figured messages to fill
My quietness with charity.

And where the yellow-hammer sings
From bramble blooms in Water Lane
I'll make a world of sweeter things
Than are in blind ambition's brain,
And there I will forget the pain
Of envy and the fears defy
That in love's bitterness complain,—
Because I walk with charity.

The primroses of Bagley Wood,
Old apple trees at Piddington,
Helvellyn in his cloudy hood—
Shall I not write them one by one,
The true, the best, occasion
Of all my faith before I die?
For other gossellers are none
To teach me holy charity.

THE RECORDER

It was not dawn ; in the full day
I drowsed my wits in sleep,
And let the rich world steal away,
Without a song to keep.

Then from a dripping timber-stack,
Where the wild thistle grew,
Spreading his scarlet plumes and black,
Again the loud cock crew.

THE WOOD-CARVER

(TO W. G. S.)

OUT of his ash did he conceive her mood,
Repentant Eve, her sad face bowed among
Cascades of hair, her limbs, that had been dewed
Lately in Eden where the apples hung,
Now carved for ever in a lovely sorrow,
All love, all grief, all kindred with the flowers
That now flush wood and meadow, and
to-morrow

Are ghosts, are tears among remembered hours.
O little Eve, bowed in your loss for ever,
Bowed bosom and clasped hands and hidden
face,

We are your sorrow too, and master never
The loss of spring and the wild April grace—
We love, and sin, and lose, as you to be
An image carved in beauty from the tree.

THE DYING PHILOSOPHER TO HIS FIDDLER

COME, fiddler, play one tune before I die.
Philosophy is barren, and I lie
Untouched now by the plagues of all the schools,
And only silly fiddlers are not fools.

Bring then your bow, and on the strings let be,
In this last hour, merely the melody
Of waves and leaves and footfalls hazardous,
Where crafty logic shall not keep with us.

The patient fields of knowledge did I sow ;
I have done with knowledge—for I nothing
know.

Wisdom and folly set their faces hence,
And in their eyes a twin-intelligence.

Only your notes may quick again the keen
Tree-shadows cut upon the paddock's green,
The pools where mirrored branches are at rest,
The heron lifting to her windy nest.

And these are things that know not argument ;
Come, fiddler, play ; philosophy is spent.
Out of my thought the chiding doctors slip,
And you are now the only scholarship.

THE FLAME

MYSELF I do but find
An ashen mind,
While others greeting me
Are flames, I see.
Yet they, alone, lament
Flames that are spent,
Remembering with shame
My crystal flame . . .
Hereafter then I'll be
A flame to me.

THE GARDEN

STONE walls, dear trees, worn paths of every day,
Because you have lived so cleanly in my mind
Something of me for ever in you shall stay,
When I the smaller acre yet shall find.
When noon is bright I shall be with your
flowers,

With you the snows of winter I shall wear,
And when, enchanted in the midnight hours, *
You are a silver lake, I shall be there.

And none shall know, or few ; yet, knowing not,
The stranger here shall with your spirit take
Into his heart a kinship unforgot
That still you tell in numbers for my sake,
And in your mute occasion then shall be
Some whispered word that once you learnt of
me.

HEREAFTER

ONE evening, by some hearth, I know not when,
A stranger to my song shall come to read
What faring was my lot through times and men,
How I was proud, how sorry, with what heed
I was glad of women, and the stars, and corn
Swelling upon my windy Cotswold height,
What miracles I counted in the morn,
And how I was defeated at the night.
And he shall make some story, as I make
Of men who sang as Marvell and as Donne,
And he shall quick his wisdom for my sake,
And put the plumes of celebration on,
And tell how, as of old, the clouded brain
Of man in song was a bright heaven again.

VOTIVE

O MOON, swung there immeasurably far,
Yet only in the pear-tree top, how then
Shall we body in thought the beauty that you
are—

Your wizardry upon the souls of men ?

Hush ! Let us say it is the tender light
That falls in silver circumstance and red
Dimly upon the regions of the night,
And saying this how little then is said.

Why should this mute enchantment thus possess
Our hearts in adoration—how should come
This worship of a ghost of quietness,
Of spectral tides that move not and are dumb ?

Why do we worship ? We are but strays of
will,

While the sun takes us. Folded now and far
From the day's light, we are minds possessed
and still,

Vision and peace. We worship what we are.

TWO SHIPS

THE morning shone with April on
A little silver ship at sea,
With happy sails, and bearing bales
To Panama from Tripoli,
And fortunately bound
She went without a sound.

Into the night, forlornly bright
There came a little ship of gold,
Without a name, she passed in flame,
With cargoes never to be told,
Out of a port unknown,
Swinging to death alone.

PORTIA'S HOUSEKEEPING

WE are thrifty of joy in this our modern house ;
We probe the springs of joy with uneasy rods,
And shadow the worm in every thrilling bud.
Virtue we know will walk in seedy rags
Of knavery when the better humour fails ;
And we know the good man's shadow of desire.

It was not so with Portia. She was simple,
Plain for clear yes or no and good or bad.
Bassanio at Belmont in the evening,
Walking the terrace with Antonio,
Was a good man with his friend, and that was
all,

Save that his lips were young and masterful.
She had no fine philosophy of sin ;
You lied, and that was bad. You gave your
word,

And, when time came, redeemed it. A
treasure kept

At another's cost was ashes in your hand.
She liked her roses red, her lilies white,
And counted punctual hours in guests a virtue.
Sometimes she thought of a Jew and a young
doctor

Standing before the majesty of Venice,
And smiled, without approval, then again
To sow the asters or feed guinea-fowl.
Gratiano, finding ever new Nerissas
Among her maids, she told not to be tedious,
And Gratiano said she was growing dull.

She liked the verse Lorenzo took to writing
And made some tunes herself upon the lute
To fit a little moonlight sequence. When
Launcelot Gobbo stole a goose at Christmas,
She did not say he was an honest fellow,
But rated him and almost sent him off ;
He didn't brag about it to his fellows.
She had two children, and said two were
enough,
And loved them. She believed there was a God
With an impatient ear for casuistry.
Bassanio had no regrets, but some
Agreed with Gratiano. I do not know.
In Belmont was a lady richly left ?

NIGHT MUSIC

(TO B. V. J.)

ENCHANTED as those days in Caliban's isle,
A music from the night falls on my hill,
 And variously played.
In the hushed moonrise many sounds there are,
Inaudible but to the moods of prayer,
 Into one music made.

Over the foothills from the valley comes
The lowing of some straggler from the herd,
 Roaming in pastures deep.
A sheep-dog's challenge through the dark is met
By the ewe-mothers and their lambs that now
 Are muffled flocks of sleep.

Sweeping across the fern twin measures go,
Towards Worcester one, and Hereford, where
 weave,
 Glooming, a pair of jars.
Faintly, afar, a brown owl speaks the night,
And hears high up, from out these hill-top pines,
 His mate among the stars.

And, under all, the wind about the gorse
Creeps, or as fire rushes, and burns up
 All sound into one song.
And in the night it flows about my grief,
Healing a little, as on Setebos
 Was eased that older wrong.

So in my heart beauty with beauty strives,
And good slays good. O spirit of wisdom, run,
As the wise wind to-night,
Through me, and make my crazy tunes all one ;
Upon the trouble of my blindness bring
Light, and for ever light.

IN THE VALLEY

LET none devout forgive my sin
Who have not sinned as I ;
The soul immaculate within
Has not to measure by
My sorrowing husbandry.

The dark, the error, of my days
Shall be consoled by none
That have not in forbidden ways
Wandered as I have done
With faces from the sun.

Princes of virtue, keep your skill
Of pardon for your peers ;
Frail with the frail I travel still
Along uncertain years—
Forbear your holy tears.

One hour in black Gethsemane
I walked with him alone.
He sees, he knows, he touches me—
How shall it then be known
To you, O hearts of stone ?

MALEDICTION

THRUSH, across the twilight
Here in the abbey close,
Pouring from your lilac-bough
Note on pebbled note,
Why do you sing so,
Making your song so bright,
Swelling to a throbbing curve
That brave little throat ?

Soon, but a season brief,
The lice among your feathers,
Stiff-winged and aimless-eyed,
With song dead you shall fall ;
Refuse of some clotted ditch,
Seeking no more berries,—
Why with lyric numbers now
Do you the twilight call ?

Proud in your tawny plumes
Mottled in devising,
Singing as though never sang
Bird in close till now—
Sharp are the javelins
Of death that are seeking,
Seeking even simple birds
On a lilac-bough.

Crushed, forlorn, a frozen thing,
For no more nesting,
For no more speckled eggs
In pattered cup of clay,

Soon your song shall come to this,
You who make the twilight yours,
And echoes of the abbey,
At the end of day.

In the song I hear it,
The thud of a poor feathered death,
In the swelling throat I see
The splintering of song—
What demon then has worked in me
To tease my brain to bitterness—
In me who have loved bird and tree
So long, so long ?

Until I come to charity,
Until I find peace again,
My curse upon the fiend or god
That will not let me hear
A bird in song upon the bough,
But, hovering about the notes,
There chimes the maniac beating
Of black-winged fear.

SPECTRAL

WHAT will the years tell ?
Hush ! If it would but speak—
That shadow athwart the stream,
In the gloom of a dream ;

Could my brain but spell
The thought in the brain of that weak
Old ghost that hides in the gloom,
Over there, of the chestnut bloom.

I sit in the broad June light
On the open bank of the river,
In the summer of manhood, young ;
And over the water bright
Is a lair that is overhung
With coned pink blooms that quiver
And droop till the water's breast
Is of petal and leaf caressed.

And the June sky glares on my prime—
But there in the gloom, with Time,
Huddled, with Time on its back,
Is a shadow that is my wrack.

Yes, it is I in the lair,
Peering and watching me there.

Under the chestnut bloom
My old age hides in the gloom.

And the years to be have been,
Could I spell the lore of that brain.
But the river flows between,
Over the weeds of pain,
Over the snares of death,
Maybe, should I leap to hold,
With myself grown old,
Council there in the gloom
Under the chestnut bloom.

And so, with instruction none,
I go, and leave it there,
My ghost with Time in its lair,
And the things that must yet be done
Tear at my heart unknown,
And the years have tongues of stone
With no syllable to make
For consolation's sake.

But peradventure yet
I shall return
To dare the weeds of death,
And plunge through the coned pink bloom,
And cry on that spectre set
In its silent ring of gloom,
And slay my youth to learn
The thing that my old age saith.

THE CRY

DEAR life, be merciful and kind,
Lend me your hand, for I am blind,
Lend me your wit, for mine too soon
Inhabits with the spectral moon,
Prepare your still intelligence
To watch beside my ailing sense.

Life, I have made my pilgrimage
All as you bade, and, wage by wage,
Your service seemed but well to me.
Now gentle in persuasion be,
When after you I fall and bleed,
And hear not where your footfalls lead.

My song no tardy messenger
Has been of any word that there
Dwelt from your charge for witnessing,
Let me not be an outcast thing,
Dear life, this weather, from your fold,
With a great heart untimely old.

In faith to you have laboured long
My blood, my purposes, my song.
In faith to you my hope is dumb,
To this poor waste of darkness come.
O life, forsake me not, who lie
Broken upon your Calvary.

WHO WERE BEFORE ME

LONG time in some forgotten churchyard earth
of Warwickshire,
My fathers in their generations lie beyond
desire,
And nothing breaks the rest, I know, of John
Drinkwater now,
Who left in sixteen-seventy his roan team at
plough.

And James, son of John, is there, a mighty
ploughman too,
Skilled he was at thatching and the barleycorn
brew,
And he had a heart-load of sorrow in his day,
But ten score of years ago he put it away.

Then Thomas came, and played a fiddle cut of
mellow wood,
And broke his heart, they say, for love that
never came to good . . .
A hundred winter peals and more have rung
above his bed—
O, poor eternal grief, so long, so lightly,
comforted.

And in the gentle yesterday these were but
glimmering tombs,
Or tales to tell on fireside eves of legendary
dooms ;

I being life while they were none, what had
their dust to bring
But cold intelligence of death upon my tides of
Spring ?

Now grief is in my shadow, and it seems well
enough
To be there with my fathers, where neither fear
nor love
Can touch me more, nor spite of men, nor my
own teasing blame,
While the slow mosses weave an end of my
forgotten name.

THE YEARS

WHEN I was young and twenty
I'd run a many mile,
And when I came to thirty
I'd sit and rest awhile,
And now that I am thirty-five
I am the sleepest man alive.

But maybe when I'm forty
I'll shake my legs again,
And walk from then till fifty
With young and striding men,
And hillward go in sixty's wear
To see how yet the counties fare.

When I am old and eighty,
All treasons will be done
Of love and silly bitterness ;
And I shall watch the sun
Go out, and little heed the fear
That smote upon my middle-year.

So twenty comes to eighty
By many a stony track,
And times I have for merchandise
But sorrows in my pack.
But youth foretold them not, and yet
Age will but count them to forget.

So though I come from twenty
To be at thirty-five,
Beset by fears and fancies,
The sleepest man alive.
Some birthday yet I'll rise and keep
A prouder soul before I sleep.

Before I sleep at eighty,
Never again to know
The hill-tops and the counties
And striding men below,
And furious fevers fade away
To song, and into grass my clay.

TO AND FRO ABOUT THE CITY

SHAKESPEARE is dust, and will not come
To question from his Avon tomb,
And Socrates and Shelley keep
An Attic and Italian sleep.

They will not see us, nor again
Shall indignation light the brain
Where Lincoln on his woodland height
Tells out the spring and winter night.

They see not. But, O Christians, who
Throng Holborn and Fifth Avenue,
May you not meet, in spite of death,
A traveller from Nazareth ?

VOCATION

THIS be my pilgrimage and goal,
Daily to march and find
The secret phrases of the soul,
The evangels of the mind.

While easy tongues are lightly heard,
Let me with them be great
Who still upon the perfect word
As heavenly fowlers wait.

In taverns none will I be seen
But can my dæmon teach
My cloudy thought to wash all clean
In the bright sun of speech.

FAIRFORD NIGHTINGALES

THE nightingales at Fairford sing
As though it were a common thing
To make the day melodious
With tones that use to visit us
Only when thrush and blackbird take
Their sleep nor know the moon's awake.

These nightingales they sing at noon,
Not lyric lone, but threading June
With songs of many nightingales,
Till the meridian summer pales,
And here by day that spectral will
Is spending its enchantment still.

Nor shyly in far woodland bowers
But walled among the garden flowers,
The Fairford nightingales are free,
That so the fabled melody
Is from the haunted groves of Thrace
Falling on Fairford market-place.

O nightingales that leave the night
To join the melodists of light,
And leave your coppiced gloom to dare
The fellowship forsaken there,
Fresh hours, fresh leaves can dispossess
Nor spoil your music's loneliness.

BEACONS

ONE home together by the fells we knew
And the blue brakes of England in the spring,
And we had sires who also heard the bells
Somewhere along the English meadows. We
Measure one cause, one spirit, and one word,
And in one pilgrim faith have done our part
In the slow world's devising. Some queer grain
Of oak out of our soil moulded alike
The *Mayflower*, the *Revenge*. The East has
dreams,

Lotus and temples and the circled fingers,
Building in contemplation. The sun returns
Yet to the South with Mediterranean song,
And Provence bears the old Athenian gift,
And still is heard the praise of troubadours,
Which is for service ; from the Siberian fields
A sobbing and a moving in the night,
Where a great lineage communes with the earth,
Till grief is beauty and the wise revelation.
So from the races life inherits well,
Stillness, and flight, and faith. And we the
West,

Whose tides from Kent to California move,
Shall we not be the new adventurers ?

America, you were in Shakespeare's word,
And Milton's, half a prophecy. You were
An Ironside when Cromwell took the field,
Drake fared for you, and Nelson is your blood.

And England, little fens and pools and hills,
Green friendliness of pastures in the dusk, *
White-thorn where thrushes nest, grey thatch
and stone,

What excellence of you was there that day
When an unnoted sail put out to sea
From Plymouth to the England of a dream ?
At Yorktown did your nobler heart lament
Among the lost or beat with Washington ?
And has not Lincoln in your proper tongue
Your chronicle retold of Runnymede ?
Then, pledged upon a happier covenant
Than furnished old crusades, with none to fear
Of arms or treasons, having for our faith
To covet not an acre of the world,
Shall we not be the new adventurers ?
Come—let us get our gospel now by heart—
One man in grief sets a whole world in tears ;
No man is free while one for freedom fears.

ENGLAND TO CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

ONCE—in the day of our meridian song
And young armadas—on your Bohemian hill
An older fame suffered an alien wrong
Where arms again blasphemed a people's will.
And freedom slept among your heroes then,
Sepulchred on White Mountain, till a theme
Of the unforgotten music called again,
And sovranity was where had been a dream.

Fortune, for all our wisdom, we can shape not,
Being free, we yet are kinsmen of the blind,
The snares of our own hearts we can escape not,
Our bravest end is fortitude of mind—
But Masaryk knows, Bohemia knows, that
thence
The spirit of man walks in magnificence.

May 1920.

THE MAN WHO WON THE WAR

THE PASSING OF HIS BODY

WHOEVER sinned in this, it was not he,
While warriors of the tongue defiled our name
His was no casual service, nor shall be
 A casual fame.

To-day let all philosophies be dumb.
And every ardour pause a moment thus,
To say of him, who back from death has come,—
 “ He died for us.”

Not lonely, though unnamed. Battalions deep
With you are ghostly multitudes, who tell
Nothing, nor claim. Together to your sleep
 Pass, and farewell.

November 11th, 1920.

JOHN KEATS

OUT of the fevers and dark imaginations
That were his day, he would turn to the
 mirrored quietness,
The imaged world, ordered from the desires
Of those his fathers whose fevers were as his
 own,
And there he found the peace of understanding
In Troys and Fairylands and Heaven and Hell.

And thence the brain that was John Keats took
 power
To build an imaged world his own, and devise
Shape for the fevers and dark imaginations,
Winnowing, moulding all, till all was beauty.

Now again we are but blind men, darkly
Fingering circumstance, sick men with our
 fevers,
And his brief time of passion and frustration
Shines over us, an image for our doctrine,
A sorrow shaped, a speculation bodied,
That we the clearer may behold ourselves,
Because of his bright moons and nightingales.

And thus alone shall be the world's salvation.

SAMPLERS

In praise of love, upon my mind
Samplers I'll make to be,
As lovers long ago designed
Emblems of courtesy,
Threading in warm and frosty wools
Their wisdom's calendars and rules.

He errs to think those hands were set
All spinster-like and cold,
Who spelt a scarlet alphabet,
And birds of blue and gold,
And made immortal garden-plots
Of daisies and forget-me-nots.

The bodkins wove an even pace,
Yet these are lyrics too,
Breathing of spectral lawn and lace,
Old ardours to renew,
For in the corners love would keep
His fold among the little sheep.

So I will samplers make as well,
Nor shall the colours lack
In shining characters to tell
Your lovely Zodiac,
And all your kisses there and words
Shall spring again as flowers and birds.

TO WASTE NOT

UNDER the snow
Are roots to blow
So soon with daffodils,
And buds prepare
The cowslips' wear,
Buried below the hills.

Within the brake
So soon shall wake
The building birds to sing,
And folded now
In every bough
Are bridals of the Spring.

Shall Love be lost
In tardy frost
When other flowers are free ?
Or less than birds
Shake happy words
As blossoms from the tree ?

O Love, make haste
Or time will waste
The habit of your lute,
Prepare your string
To play the Spring,
Or be for ever mute.

THE BOND

O FAR and well my gentleness
Has walked among your coverts green,
With your still wisdom to possess
My weary brain and gather in
My thought from madness, as the bells
Do beggared flocks from stormy fells.

Now mute and careful shall I live
Your constant alien to be ?
Or, as the honest fugitive,
Lend love but sad security ?
O love, be brave, and bid me go
In freedom still your bondfellow.

DECISION

HAD we our bodies to provide
With rule for an eternal date
Well should our intellectual pride
Upon the years for witness wait,
Holding our adversary's will
But heresy for time to kill.

And here where but a mood goes by
And we are folded from the sun,
In marriage of the grave to lie,
And every argument is done,
Each burning hour of argument
Is but in wrangling folly spent.

I will no cunning words devise ;
Once told, I can but let you be
In your own patient counsel wise
Of my love's simple honesty,
While somewhere is an acre sown
That shall instruct us, bone by bone.

SURETY

Love is not dead
We have cherished it too long,
We have planted it too deep,
And we have watered well
The roots and branches spread
In earth and airy song.
Love has a word to keep,
A word to tell.

Yes, that is all.
I know behind the fume
Of this poor difference
Love waits, nor grieves too much,
Till the old voices call,
And sings upon the gloom
Too sure an eloquence
For death to touch.

Too long a date
Has love between us plied
For that long trodden path
To wear in weeds or rain,
Too long in love's debate
Have we been satisfied,
For jealousies of wrath
To blind the brain.

UNION

I

SUPPOSE me dead ; think of the man you made,
A moment, but as earth, unbreathing more,
His garments folded, and his reckoning paid
Of love, and faith, and fame ; then, as before
A chronicle all done, with *finis* writ,
Ask if the man you made had truly been
More worth your pride and daily watching wit
Had fear of you one passage cancelled clean.

Would you not say, serenely gosselled then,
“ I taught him faith, I bade his word be said
Fearing no challenge nor reproof of men ;
And had the happy courage that I bred
Once brought me chill obedience for wage,
This chronicle had been a poorer page ” ?

II

For, dear, I can but serve you at the rate
That is my heart's occasion, that is all ;
If I deny myself and with you wait,
It is not I, however you may call ;
Something of me must go, if I deny,
Though in denial shall be with you still
A body walking and a watchful eye,
The patient service of an impoverished will.

For if the love that loved, and chose, and came
Ever again to you, nor ever found
Estrangement in far absences, nor blame

For pilgrimage to other Edens bound,
Should know one beauty by your will denied,
Thenceforth how should old faith be satisfied ?

III

But when you bid me go as beauty calls,
Knowing that my desire could follow none
But fair vocation, and that intervals
In honest love are still love's errands done,
When you upon my embarkation wait,
And cry, " O Keel ! forth in pursuit of spring,
All Archipelagos to navigate,
You are my ship, and this your voyaging "—

Then nothing lets between your sovran pride
And all my kingdom, nor is poor pretence
That over all my fortunes you preside
When half my levies are rebellious pence ;
Then do you govern that your craft began,
A man, and not the shadow of a man.

AGAINST TREASON

ALL you have been you can be in this hour,
My need will be my need for evermore.
Time cannot steal your excellence of power,
Nor stain the love that liveried you before,
If you shall but your wonted honour keep,
And daily meet me with quick truth of old,
And let nor change nor dark alloy nor sleep
Betray your former witness of its mould.

But if in other features you present
The woman that I loved, how should I make
Renewal daily of an old content
I knew for her whose covenant you break ?
Though you yourself betrayed your elder pride.
I would not in your treason be allied.

FOR THIS MOMENT

LET me, who am your poet—(nor thereby
Think me less yours that other worlds I sing
Than your sweet universe) now let me try
Persuasion such as in an antique spring
Pan among cowslip meadows might have thus
Found with his shepherd's daughter prosperous :

“ O love, why should you ever look beyond
This gladness into past or future time,
Accusing in your mind the heart now fond,
With phantom treason or ungendered crime?
For mortal ever is the lover's kiss
And mocks who claims diviner emphasis.

“ But one day and another day shall come
New kisses, love, with each its sovran power
Bidding to-morrow's history be dumb
And yesterday's but a forgotten hour,
Fold up your fears, put your sad fancies by,
Lest in complaint our sweet occasion die.

“ Lest in complaint of sad example grow
But barren hours to-morrow from to-day ;
Love lives but by renewal, and can show
Constant succession never ; therefore pay
Proudly the charges of this present need,
Or bid me sound on other shores my reed.”

DEATH AND A LOVER

DEATH. A LOVER. HIS DEAD MISTRESS ON A BIER

LOVER

BLIND, silly Death, although you nothing care
For my despair,
Could you not see my darling was too fair
For earth to lose ?

DEATH

The wit, when love comes to so quick a close,
Distempered goes—
No day but earth shall build bright limbs as
those,
For me to bruise.

LOVER

Then, though the world is tearless for her sake,
Some pity take
Upon my dark immortal sorrow,—wake
This pretty one.

DEATH

Ten thousand years ago a lover cried,
“ Ah, let betide
What may, my grief must ever more abide.”
His grief is done.

LOVER

She might have borne me children straight and
strong,
To plough the long
Furrows, and make their ploughing in a song
Articulate.

DEATH

Still shall the green blades break upon the
spring,
And song shall bring
Her liberty to every captive thing,
Early or late.

LOVER

Though, Death, you govern me in argument,
Still goes unspent
My grief, my grief. How shall I be content,
O King of Fear ?

DEATH

I neither pity nor console. Farewell.
Bearers, the bell
Calls you. Alone his sorrow let him tell.
She will not hear.

THE PLEDGE

WHEN love is bright and whole again,
I'll sing like the bee's weather,
I'll set my colours up again
Like the cock-pheasant's feather,
I'll find a note to make me one
With lyric birds that sing the sun.

I'll fill my songs with palmer's buds
And sprigs of thorn for Whitsunday,
And they shall dance as willow rods,
And shine with garlands of the may,
I'll be a theme that takes the spring
From bushes where the blackbirds sing.

I'll walk among my sheep again
And turn my steps to numbers,
When love is bright and whole again
And fear has gone to slumbers,
With wings again and flowers and stars
To be my coloured calendars.

NUNC DIMITTIS

I HAVE seen the plover's wing,
And the grey willow bough,
The sandy bubbling spring,
The hawk over the plough,
And now, instructed so,
I am content to go.

Songs of the lake and wood
Of water and wind I have heard,
And I have understood
According to Thy word.
What then is now to learn ?
Seaward, O soul, return.

Though I shall walk again
Nor spring nor winter field,
Yet surely in my brain
Are spring and winter sealed.
Earth you have shown me all,
I am ready for the call.

THE PROVIDENCE

I do not ask, and yet you give,
You give, and yet without design,—
Only some wonder, fugitive
In you from all the world, is mine.

You do not bid me serve, and still
I am all service for your sake,
And gift by gift my daily will
For me does a new kingdom make.

COVENANT

I WOULD no sweeter treasure know
From your dear love than I can give,
And in such peace as you bestow
I pray for you to live.

Star to rejoicing star shall move
And flower on happy flower shall shine,
But all the sorrows of our love,—
Let these be wholly mine.

Yet that is treason. For I bear
No prouder heart than is your own,
And you would scorn the love would share
Delight and grieve alone.

PERSUASION

Then I asked: "Does a firm persuasion that a thing is so, make it so?"

He replied: "All Poets believe that it does, and in ages of imagination this firm persuasion removed mountains; but many are not capable of a firm persuasion of anything."

BLAKE'S *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

I

At any moment love unheralded
Comes, and is king. Then as, with a fall
Of frost, the buds upon the hawthorn spread
Are withered in untimely burial,
So love, occasion gone, his crown puts by,
And as a beggar walks unfriended ways,
With but remembered beauty to defy
The frozen sorrows of unsceptred days.
Or in that later travelling he comes
Upon a bleak oblivion, and tells
Himself, again, again, forgotten tombs
Are all now that love was, and blindly spells
His royal state of old a glory cursed,
Saying "I have forgot," and that's the worst.

If we should part upon that one embrace,
And set far courses ever, each from each,
With all our treasure but a fading face
And little ghostly syllables of speech,
Should beauty's moment never be renewed,
And moons on moons look out for us in vain,
And each but whisper from a solitude
To hear but echoes of a lonely pain,—
Still in a world that fortune cannot change
Should walk those two that once were you and I,
Those two that once when moon and stars were
 strange
Poets above us in an April sky,
Heard a voice falling on the midnight sea,
Mute, and for ever, but for you and me.

III

THIS nature, this great flood of life, this cheat
That uses us as baubles for her coat,
Takes love, that should be nothing but the beat
Of blood for its own beauty, by the throat,
Saying, you are my servant and shall do
My purposes, or utter bitterness
Shall be your wage, and nothing come to you
But stammering tongues that never can
confess.

Undaunted then in answer here I cry,
“ You wanton, that control the hand of him
Who masquerades as wisdom in a sky
Where holy, holy, sing the cherubim,
I will not pay one penny to your name
Though all my body crumble into shame.”

IV

WOMAN, I once had whimpered at your hand,
Saying that all the wisdom that I sought
Lay in your brain, that you were as the sand
Should cleanse the muddy mirrors of my
thought ;

I should have read in you the character
Of oracles that quick a thousand lays,
Looked in your eyes, and seen accounted there
Solomons legioned for bewildered praise.
Now have I learnt love as love is. I take
Your hand, and with no inquisition learn
All that your eyes can tell, and that's to make
A little reckoning and brief, then turn
Away, and in my heart I hear a call,
“ I love, I love, I love ” ; and that is all.

WHEN all the hungry pain of love I bear,
And in poor lightless thought but burn and burn,
And wit goes hunting wisdom everywhere,
Yet can no word of revelation learn,
When endlessly the scales of yea and nay
In dreadful motion fall and rise and fall,
When all my heart in sorrow I could pay
Until at last were left no tear at all,
Then if with tame or subtle argument
Companions come and draw me to a place
Where words are but the tappings of content,
And life spreads all her garments with a grace,
I curse that ease, and hunger in my heart
Back to my pain and lonely to depart.

NOT anything you do can make you mine,
For enterprise with equal charity
In duty as in love elect will shine,
The constant slave of mutability.
Nor can your words for all their honey breath
Outsing the speech of many an older rhyme,
And though my ear deliver them from death
One day or two, it is so little time.
Nor does your beauty in its excellence
Excel a thousand in the daily sun,—
Yet must I put a period to pretence,
And with my logic's catalogue have done,
For act and word and beauty are but keys
To unlock the heart, and you, dear love, are
these.

VII

NEVER the heart of spring had trembled so
 As on that day when first in Paradise
 We went afoot as novices to know
 For the first time what blue was in the skies,
 What fresher green than any in the grass,
 And how the sap goes beating to the sun,
 And tell how on the clocks of beauty pass
 Minute by minute till the last is done.
 But not the new birds singing in the brake,
 And not the buds of our discovery,
 The deeper blue, the wilder green, the ache
 For beauty that we shadow as we see,
 Made heaven, but we, as love's occasion brings,
 Took these, and made them Paradisal things.

VIII

THE lilacs offer beauty to the sun,
Throbbing with wonder as eternally
For sad and happy lovers they have done
With the first bloom of summer in the sky,
Yet they are newly spread in honour now,
Because, for every beam of beauty given
Out of that clustering heart, back to the bough
My love goes beating, from a greater heaven.
So be my love for good or sorry luck
Bound, it has virtue on this April eve
That shall be there for ever when they pluck
Lilacs for love. And though I come to grieve
Long at a frosty tomb, there still shall be
My happy lyric in the lilac tree.

IX

WHEN they make silly question of my love,
And speak to me of danger and disdain,
And look by fond old argument to move
My wisdom to docility again,
When to my prouder heart they set the pride
Of custom and the gossip of the street,
And show me figures of myself beside
A self diminished at their judgment seat,
Then do I sit as in a drowsy pew
To hear a priest expounding th' heavenly will,
Defiling wonder that he never knew
With stolen words of measured good and ill,
For to the love that knows their counselling,
Out of my love contempt alone I bring.

Not love of you is most that I can bring,
Since what I am to love you is the test,
And should I love you more than any thing
You would but be of idle love possessed,
A mere love wandering in appetite,
Counting your glories and yet bringing none,
Finding in you occasions of delight,
A thief of payment for no service done.
But when of labouring life I make a song
And bring it you, as that were my reward,
To let what most is me to you belong,
Then do I come of high possessions lord,
And loving life more than my love of you
I give you love more excellently true.

WHAT better tale could any lover tell
 When age or death his reckoning shall write
 Than thus, " Love taught me only to rebel
 Against these things,—the thieving of delight
 Without return ; the gossellers of fear
 Who, loving, yet deny the truth they bear,
 Sad-suited lusts with lecherous hands to smear
 The cloth of gold they would but dare not wear.
 And love gave me great knowledge of the trees,
 And singing birds, and earth with all her flowers,
 Wisdom I knew and righteousness in these,
 I lived in their atonement all my hours ;
 Love taught me how to beauty's eye alone
 The secret of the lying heart is known."

XII

THIS then at last ; we may be wiser far
 Than love, and put his folly to our measure,
 Yet shall we learn, poor wizards that we are,
 That love chimes not nor motions at our
 pleasure.

We bid him come, and light an eager fire,
 And he goes down the road without debating,
 We cast him from the house of our desire,
 And when at last we leave he will be waiting.
 And in the end there is no folly but this,
 To counsel love out of our little learning,
 For still he knows where rotten timber is,
 And where the boughs for the long winter
 burning,

And when life needs no more of us at all,
 Love's word will be the last that we recall.

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J. D.

**Seeds
of
Time**

By
John
Drink-
water

—
Sidg-
wick
and
Jackson
Ltd.



KU-995-230

